



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Economic Development Division
Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report
2nd Tuesday of the Month– June 9th, 2020

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Introduction

The following Urbana Arts & Culture Program Monthly Progress Report describes activities of the Arts & Culture Program for the Urbana Arts & Culture Commission. The report includes information regarding projects that are in progress, recent requests and recommendations from the public, staff activities, and upcoming events.

COVID-19 Crisis Impact

- **Suspension of Programs/Events:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program suspended all in-person events and programs in response to the COVID-19 crisis when Illinois first went under the Governor's order in mid-March. Staff are following guidelines set forth in the Illinois Five-Phase Reopening Plan and consulting public health guidance. Some events are being held virtually and Urbana Arts and Culture staff are working to share relief program information, resources for local artists, and continue various initiatives.
- **Staffing Changes & Accommodations:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program staff continue to work from home with minor visits to the office as needed. City of Urbana offices remain closed to the public. Essential services are still in operation. The Summer Youth Employment Grant received by the Urbana Arts and Culture Program to fund two high school summer interns was approved by Urbana City Council and hiring efforts are underway. Additionally, we have new University of Illinois student interns through the new We CU program. Interns will work virtually until further notice.

Updates on Current Projects

- **Urbana Arts Grants:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program awarded \$88,000 to artists, arts organizations, and festival presenters for 38 creative projects that enrich the lives of Urbana residents and visitors in the 2020 cycle. Nearly all grantees have completed contracts and nearly all have received initial grant payments.
- **Art in the Time of Quarantine Youth Exhibition:** The Urbana Arts and Culture Program collaborated with (listed alphabetically): Chambanamoms, Krannert Art Museum, KOOP Adventure Play, and Museum of the Grand Prairie to organize a youth arts exhibition collaboratively with local art teachers and the greater public. Student submissions gathered from this project were to be compiled into a video for Urbana Public Television as part of a premiere and will be archived by the Museum of the Grand Prairie. *The collaborating partners opted to delay the release citing the following: "In deference to this historic moment, we are temporarily postponing the virtual art event, Art in a Time of Quarantine."* The event is currently rescheduled for Thursday, June 11th.

- **Virtual Events:** In collaboration with Champanamoms, KOOP Adventure Play, and Museum of the Grand Prairie, Urbana Arts and Culture Program has helped spearhead virtual events designed to keep the community feeling together during times of separation. These include:

 - Monday Art Inspired! with The Urbana Free Library (*ongoing Mondays*)
 - Spurlock Museum & 40 North Installation Collaboration (*in development*)
 - Urbana Poetry Projects with Urbana Park District & The Urbana Free Library (*in development*)

- **Urbana's Inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger:** The City of Urbana's inaugural Poet Laureate, Will Reger, had to cancel a number of in-person events, appearances, and initiatives due to the COVID-19 crisis. The following initiatives were held virtually with much success:

 - Poets in a Pandemic (*formerly Poets on a Park Bench; converted to virtual format*)
 - Postcard Poetry Project (*becoming a digital archive rather than exhibition*)
 - Poems on Glass (*continuing normally without unveiling events*)
 - Request-A-Poem from Poet Laureate, Will Reger (*request via email*)
 - Sounds like Community with Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center featuring Poet Laureate Will Reger (*exact date TBA*)
 - Young Artist's Studio Poetry Workshop for Kids! (*Sunday, June 21st, 2020*)
 - Teen Poetry Workshop (*exact date TBA*)

- **Young Artist's Studio:** In collaboration with The Urbana Free Library, the Urbana Arts and Culture Program will now be offering Young Artist's Studio workshops virtually using Zoom. Participants are asked to register on The Urbana Free Library's website to obtain the link and password. The first in this virtual series featured *Kids Learn Filmmaking!* with Thomas Nicol, one of the Founders of Pens to Lens. The next workshop features Urbana Poet Laureate Will Reger with a *Poetry Writing for Kids!* Workshop on Sunday, June 21st, 2020. All upcoming Young Artist's Studio workshops will take place virtually until further notice.

- **Urbana's Downtown Get Down:** The City of Urbana Arts & Culture Program, Urbana Park District, 40 North Champaign County Arts Council, The Urbana Free Library, and the Urbana Business Association collaborate to present the Downtown Get Down, a downtown events series that takes place on the 4th Saturday of the month May-August on Main Street in the heart of Downtown. In accordance with the Restore Illinois five-stage plan to reopen Illinois in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the City of Urbana's extension of the suspension of special event permits through September 7th, 2020, Urbana's Downtown Get Down summer festival series is cancelled. The Downtown Get Down planning committee will explore alternative avenues for continuing to nurture the local arts and culture scene and bolster area businesses. Staff invite perspectives and feedback from the Urbana Arts and Culture Commission.

- **Art at the Market:** Urbana Business Association was forced to cancel the remaining indoor farmer's markets in Lincoln Square Mall. While Urbana's Market in the Square is up and running outdoors with safety precautions in place, all Art at the Market Concerts are canceled for the foreseeable future. Notice has gone out to all who had booked with our program.
- **Murals on Glass/Urbana Utility Wrap Program:** Murals on Glass selection *In the Sunshine* by BLACKMAU (Kamau Grantham and Stacey Robinson) will be installed on Cunningham Township's front windows now that summer is here.

Additionally, the jury selected 8 approved artworks for utility boxes. Installation of both Murals on Glass and the Utility Box Murals will take place come spring. In the meantime, Urbana Arts and Culture Program continues to seek sponsors for utility box murals.

- **COVID-19 Relief for Individual Artists & Arts and Cultural Organizations:** The City of Urbana Arts & Culture Coordinator has been in close communication with the local arts and culture community to promote various relief programs and upcoming grant deadlines.

There is a comprehensive listing of individual artist grants nationwide on the Americans for the Arts website here. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus-covid-19-resource-and-response-center>

The Americans for the Arts Relief Guide is an excellent resource detailing COVID-19 resources here: shorturl.at/iwCDP.